

Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2 and 11 are amended for formal reasons. Namely, the thermoplastic fiber now is recited in terms of its orientation rather than its length. This is supported by the disclosure, for example at page 15, line 23 to page 16, line 8, wherein the fiber length is described with regard to the orientation direction of the fibers. As the changes were not made to overcome art, Applicants respectfully submit that they should not be interpreted in a limiting fashion.

No new matter has been added. Claims 1-15 are pending in the application.

In the Office Action, restriction is required to one of the following groups:

Group I: claims 1-15

Group II: claims 16-17

Applicants hereby confirm the election of Group I, claims 1-15, without traverse, as made provisionally by telephone on October 21, 2002.

Claims 2 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the rejection asserts that it is unclear what constitutes being long in length, with regard to the fibers recited in claims 2 and 11. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 2 and 11 are amended herein to recite that the fibers are direction aligned. Applicants reference page 15, line 23 to page 16, line 8 of the specification, and Figures 1 and 2. Therein, it is disclosed that non-woven fabric comprising long fibers has a fiber direction aligned along a machine direction, while non-woven fabric comprising short fibers has a fiber direction that is not fixed, and that this difference may influence the functional properties of the filter.

Applicants believe claims 2 and 11 as amended are definite. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejection.

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamaguchi Osamu et al. (JP 2000-279725), or under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Yamaguchi Osamu. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Yamaguchi Osamu has a publication date of October 10, 2000.

However, the priority date for the pending application is earlier than the publication date for Yamaguchi Osamu. The pending application derives priority from Japanese Patent Application 2000-126531, having a priority date of April 26, 2000, and Japanese Patent Application 2000-143672, having a priority date of May 16, 2000.

Translated copies of JP 2000-126531 and JP 2000-143672 are enclosed herewith, along with signed statements by the translator thereof verifying that the translations are accurate. Applicants believe this is sufficient to perfect the priority claims of the pending application.

In view of the priority dates for the pending application as compared to the publication date for Yamaguchi Osamu, Applicants believe that Yamaguchi Osamu does not provide evidence that the claimed invention was patented or described in a printed publication more than one year prior to the date of the application for patent in the United States. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Yamaguchi Osamu is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Furthermore, Applicants believe that Yamaguchi Osamu would not be available as prior art under any other portion of 35 U.S.C. § 102. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Yamaguchi Osamu also is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejection, and reserve the right to present further arguments against it.

Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Yamaguchi Osamu. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As argued above, Applicants believe that Yamaguchi Osamu is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejection, and reserve the right to present further arguments against it.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, Applicants believe all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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S/N 09/837,102

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: NOBUHARA ET AL. Examiner: JENNIFER A. BOYD
Serial No.: 09/837,102 Group Art Unit: 1771
Filed: APRIL 18, 2001 Docket No.: 13409.3US01
Title: FILTER CARTRIDGE AND PROCESS FOR PRODUCING THE SAME

Amended Claims Marked to Show Changes

2. (amended) A filter cartridge which is prepared by winding a [long fiber] non-woven fabric strip comprising a thermoplastic fiber around a perforated cylinder in a twill form, said thermoplastic fiber being direction aligned, wherein the non-woven fabric strip satisfies the following equation (B):

$$\log_{10} Y < 3.75 - 0.75 (\log_{10} X) (B)$$

wherein X ($\text{cm}^3/\text{cm}^2/\text{sec}$) is an airflow amount of the non-woven fabric strip measured in accordance with JIS L 1096-A (1990), and Y (g/m^2) is a basis weight thereof.

11. (twice amended) The filter cartridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic fiber of the non-woven fabric strip is [of a long fiber non-woven fabric] directionally aligned.